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TO DESTROY THE STELE.
EPIGRAPHIC REINSCRIPTION
AND HISTORICAL REVISION IN ATHENS*

Enrica Culasso Gastaldi

translated by

Claire Dickman-Wilkes

Over the long course of Greek history, and as a result of institutional changes, epigraphic writing underwent many forms of modification, including correction and erasure of the text and frequently even the destruction and re-use of the stone material itself. These acts, either promoted by the community or by single individuals, disclose very diverse underlying intentions. It quickly becomes evident that Athens, more than any other city, supplies for specialised analysis a large quantity of documentation amounting to many thousands of texts and offers a wide range of cases for examination.¹ A complete survey may be accomplished, however, only very approximately, since the core collection for statistical analysis remains the Berlin edition of *Inscriptiones Graecae*, the third edition of which, with its use of uniform diacritical marks, has not yet progressed beyond the first volume.² Extremely flexible criteria need to be adopted for the organisation of a database. The application of systematic criteria is inappropriate, as also are computer-based approaches, which are incompatible with the interpretative and non-mechanical nature of this research. Ultimately autopsy remains the only truly trustworthy method, but this is certainly not feasible in the initial phase of survey due to the impossibility of comparison with all the existing material. The optimal approach to the task, in our judgement, is a manual survey of the core collection, followed by autopsy, focusing on the cases which have emerged to date as displaying typical characteristics, as regards not only their epigraphical, but also their historical content and meaning.

From a project whose original aim was to examine all forms of epigraphical rewriting, a case study that may be undertaken in the current state of progress of research is

* This paper was first published in Italian as “Abbatere la stele. Riscrittura epigrafica e revisione storica ad Atene”, *Cahiers Glotz* 14 (2003), 241-262. Dates are BC, unless otherwise specified.

¹ With numerical surveys and a focus on changes to the documentation over centuries and quarter-centuries, see now Ch. W. Hedrick, “Democracy and the Athenian Epigraphical Habit”, *Hesperia*, 68, 1999, 3, pp. 387-439, especially 389-395.

² With regard to the 4th and to subsequent centuries, the Berlin edition seems hopelessly dated: firstly due to its lack of autopsy evidence and its frequent reliance on, sometimes uncertain, third person examinations (see *IG*, II², 8084); secondly because the criteria followed to indicate later interventions in the text are frequently inconsistent. A *rasura*, for example, may be indicated in the lemma (*IG*, II², 5203) or in the endnotes (*IG*, II², 1954, 1989); it may be indicated, within the text itself, by a single square bracket (*IG*, II², 766, lines 21, 25; 780, lines 11-12, 26) or a double square bracket (*IG*, II², 910, line 1; 8052, line 2) or via the framing of a writing surface or of single letters (*IG*, II², 1944; 1954; 1956; 1989; 1990) or even through the term *rasura*, sometimes also abbreviated to *ras*. (*IG*, II², 46 *aA*, between lines 24 and 25, *aB*, between lines 33 and 34; 1617, between lines 32 and 33; 1683, line 3). A further source of nuisance is caused by the, sometimes not always clear, use of diacritical marks which may give rise to diverse interpretations: for example in *IG*, II², 2103 the framing highlights letters added subsequently, perhaps in the absence of *rasura*; in *IG*, II², 687, line 59, and 834, line 13, double square brackets indicate an intervention of correction, but it is uncertain if it is *ab antiquo* or over *rasura*.

based on some well-defined typologies which are all recognisable as *ab antiquo* interventions in the epigraphical text, carried out subsequent to the first phase of writing.³

The re-use of the writing surface, a practice which may frequently be identified, could be achieved by erasure and subsequent reinscription, through additional inscription on an anepigraphic space, or even through turning the surface around without the accompanying erasure of the pre-existing text which remained legible;⁴ in addition, re-use could also frequently be achieved through writing with larger and more widely-spaced letters over the earlier text, which was not erased but which was more or less obliterated by the new intervention.⁵

A second well-documented typology encompasses the correction of pre-existing errors, achieved through writing over the text to be amended, either with or without *rasura*. Correction may also have been accommodated immediately after the amended and erased text or it may, on occasion, have assumed the form of addition in paint of the omitted letters.⁶

Finally, a third typology comprises examples of the modification and updating of a pre-existing inscription, which may have appeared no longer to answer to current political, institutional or religious tenets in either the short-, medium- or long-term. This final category embraces a very wide field of study, in which interventions of updating may have been carried out through the addition of new text beside the old in order to guarantee the process of modernisation and to reaffirm the legal and assertive validity of the decision in the contemporary situation.⁷ Adjustment may also have comprised an act of *rasura* and subsequent over-writing, resulting in an end product which is palaeographically disjointed but furnished with the requisite chronological and magisterial references and content to

³ The research conducted by the group headed by the University of Turin, amongst whom Dr Michele Zaio is notable for his indefatigable investigation, has completed an initial survey based on the Berlin collection and has updated the documentation with the support of *SEG* and *BE*.

⁴ *Rasura* with reinscription: e.g. *IG*, II², 1839, 1848, 1851, 1857, 1863, 1870, 4181, 8151, 9308; *rasura* with writing on a blank space: *IG*, I³, 898, 1390; *IG*, II², 216; cf. 4142; inscription on an anepigraphic space or on different sides of the same surface: *IG*, I³, 36, 788, 1221; *IG*, II², 336 b 4, 601, 646, 1628 + *SEG*, XXIV, 159, 1501, 2305, 2306-2307, 2308, 3229 + *SEG*, XVIII, 80; reversal of the surface: *IG*, I³, 511 = *DAA* 135 and 135 a; cf. 135 b.

⁵ Over-writing: *Agora*, XVI, 104 = E. Culasso Gastaldi, *Le prossenie ateniesi del IV secolo a.C. Gli onorati asiatici*, Alessandria, 2004, nr. 14; *IG*, II², 1940, 2295, 2296, 2304. A large number of the examples that may be identified are attributable to the actions of the *pyloroi*, the guardians of the rock of Athens, responsible in the Roman period for many re-uses of artefacts of the 4th century. In general, on reuse and survival of inscriptions over time, see A. E. Cooley ed., *The Afterlife of Inscriptions. Reusing, Rediscovering, Reinventing and Revitalizing Ancient Inscriptions*, London, 2000.

⁶ Correction without *rasura*: *IG*, II², 49 = E. Culasso Gastaldi, *Prossenie*, cit., nr. 2; with *rasura*: *IG*, II², 360 = E. Culasso Gastaldi, *Prossenie*, cit., nr. 10, *passim*. On the, definitely unusual, practice of adding coloured letters, see references in M. Guarducci, *Epigrafia greca*, I, Rome, 1967, p. 459; in general, *ibid.*, pp. 443-446, on reused monuments.

⁷ A significant example comes from the text of Athens' alliance with Perdiccas (*IG*, I³, 89) where, at lines 55-59, a more recent text is accommodated, relating to the prince of Lynkos, Arrabaios, which, at lines 58-59, decrees its inscription "in addition to the earlier decree". An example of updating is also preserved in the monumental inscription for the Athenian victory over the Boeotians and Chalcidians in the year 506 BC (*IG*, I³, 501), destroyed at the time of the Persian invasion and renewed, with the inscription on a new base, through a linguistic variant of the same elegiac distich around the middle of the 5th century. Cf. also *IG*, I³, 36, where the same stele preserves, on two opposite writing surfaces, two subsequent sacred provisions for the installation of the priestess and for the cult of Athena Nike.

ensure the topicality of the document.⁸ Much more traumatic cases are also evidence of the purpose of the modification, in which the desire, either expressed or clearly perceptible, is to chisel away the record of an historical event or political idea. On occasion the desire to obliterate the record exceeds this relatively invasive act of *rasura*, going as far as radical acts of destruction of an earlier epigraphic monument as the referent of a semiotic process concerning specific political or institutional frames of reference. The destruction of epigraphic monuments against the background of a long-term and stable democratic constitution, as that operating in Athens throughout its political history, is concentrated in the brief oligarchic periods of the tyrannies of the Thirty (404/403) and Antipater's oligarchy (321/320-319/318), while no certain proof survives of similar activity during the rule of Demetrios of Phaleron. The available material sources that verify the totalitarian choice of destruction are not so much the destroyed objects, which are obviously difficult to find, but rather the measures taken to restore the stelai, instigated by succeeding democratic governments; these governments, newly come to power, expeditiously proceeded to re-establish, by the physical renewal of ancient monuments, the course of their previous honorary or strategic policy. It is of interest, therefore, to observe this idiosyncrasy of the Greek world, for which the stele, the epigraphic preservation of the wording of a political resolution, becomes the embodiment of the resolution and, consequently, represents not a generic epigraphical document, but a transposition onto stone of the very will and authority of the political organism that produced it.⁹ It follows straightforwardly that acts of destruction and of erasure, and likewise their counterpart act of restoration, possess a strong political will whose intention is either to obliterate through demolition, or to restore through the decision to renew an *anagraphe*, not the physical object, but rather the decree and the very institution which was the guarantor of the epigraphic writing.

Among all the cases described above of *ab antiquo* intervention in epigraphical writing, only the last typology proposed, that of the modification of a pre-existing artefact in line with changing contemporary conditions in order to adjust the past in the light of the frames of reference of the present, falls strictly within the subject under discussion and can, in effect, illustrate the full distinctiveness of the Greek manifestation of those processes comparable to the *damnatio memoriae* which has conventionally been identified in the Latin world.¹⁰

⁸ A prime example is surely the case of the treaties with Rhegion and Leontinoi which, approved before 433/432, were updated in this same year by the erasure of the specifications of the former edict and the subsequent inscription of new magisterial references: cf. *IG*, I³, 53-4, with reference to the substantial bibliography on the subject. Cf. also, *IG*, II², 46 (*symbola* Athenians-Troizenians); for a proposal on the aims of erasure, see *SEG*, XLI, 39 and further bibliographical references there.

⁹ On the stele as a "physical embodiment of the agreement", see also, with relevant reflections, S. Lewis, "Public Information: News and Writing in Ancient Greece", *Hermathena*, 152, 1992, pp. 5-20, especially p. 11 ff.; R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Records*, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 45 ff.; Ead., *Literacy and the City-State in Archaic and Classical Greece*, in A. K. Bowman, ed., *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 33-50, p. 39 ff. On the mnemonic function of the monument see also Ch. W. Hedrick Jr., *Writing, Reading and Democracy*, in R. Osborne, S. Hornblower ed., *Ritual, Finance, Politics. Athenian Democratic Accounts Presented to David Lewis*, Oxford, 1994, pp. 157-74. Cf. Thuc. II, 43, 2-3, on stelai as a record of eminent men and their bravery that lives on in the ἄγραφος μνήμη of each man.

¹⁰ For a full explanation of the theme of *damnatio memoriae* in the Latin world, in addition to the contributions presented in this volume, see the recent contribution by Ch. W. Hedrick Jr., *History and Silence. Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity*, Austin, 2000, with reference to the specialist bibliography, somewhat lacking in this regard, amongst which is noted F. Vittinghoff, *Der Staatsfeind in der römischen Kaiserzeit: Untersuchungen zur 'Damnatio Memoriae'*, Berlin,

In limiting ourselves, therefore, to this last feature of the ancient documentation, it is desirable to emphasise the manifold ways in which epigraphical writing may preserve, in a more or less covert manner, traces of ancient ideological or political disagreements.

The simplest case occurs when an epigraphical declaration explicitly denounces the destruction of a former artefact, with respect to which the later inscription is intended as a restorative initiative. In decrees found among public documents, the causal conjunction *epeidē* introduces motivations of a *psephisma* with overt reference to the immediate reason for the resolution. With relative frequency, then, we read expressions of the type: “because the stele of the benefactors, that had previously been erected for them, was destroyed by the Thirty” (*IG* I³, 229, 1-4), or “because their father was *proxenos* and benefactor and, under the Thirty, the stele was destroyed” (*Agora*, XVI, 37, 7-11) or even “because his grandfather Xanthippos was *proxenos* and because the Thirty destroyed the proxeny” (*IG* II², 52, 3-5).¹¹ Certainly the destruction of stelai may not be considered the bloodiest of the many misdeeds perpetrated by the Thirty tyrants; it must, however, be gauged as a powerful instrument of political struggle. As the latter piece of evidence suggests very clearly, they “destroyed the proxeny”; the *de facto* identification between stele and proxeny, between the writing surface and its contents and between the symbol understood by the community as an object of cultural memory and the resolutions of the assembly, indicates the true aim of the punitive act: the *damnatio memoriae* not of the object, but of the institutional system responsible for the initiative.

In the absence of explicit declarations of demolition, other indications of the troubled history of a text may emerge through analysis: the presumed dating of a document, established by the mention of the archon or by other convincing arguments, seems sometimes to conflict with the lexicon or formulae that would argue an earlier period of composition. Even in the often incomplete condition of the documents, it is sometimes possible to hypothesise with certainty that an episode of reinscription occurred after a damaging act of demolition. Such circumstances are, indeed, intelligible in the history of the decree for Archonides, the Sicel ruler of Herbita, which was approved in the year

1936. Some reflections may also be found in P. J. Rhodes, “Public Documents in the Greek States: Archives and Inscriptions, II”, *Greece&Rome*, 48, 2001, 2. pp. 145-148. For an evaluation of the “frames of reference” of the present in the selection processes regarding the past, see J. Assman, *La memoria culturale. Scrittura, ricordo e identità politica nelle grandi civiltà antiche*, Torino, 1997 (= München, 1992).

¹¹ Cf. also, *IG*, II², 6, 11 ff.; 66 c (cf. M. Walbank, *Athenian Proxenes of the Fifth Century B. C.*, Toronto, 1978, nr. 26; *SEG*, XIV, 40; XXVIII, 12); *SEG*, XXXIX, 67. For literary documentation of the destruction, carried out by the Thirty, of the laws of Ephialtes and of Archestratos relative to the Areopagites, together with those of Solon, “which were discussed”, see [Arist.], *Ath. Pol.*, 35, 2. An interesting example of destruction and erasure of stelai which may be placed in the context of the political amnesty of the year 403/402, as a resolution of the democratic party on behalf of individuals who were compromised during the preceding regime, is documented by And., I (*De myst.*), 103: ὧν ἕνεκα καὶ στήλας ἀνείλετε καὶ νόμους ἀκύρους ἐποίησατε καὶ ψηφίσματα ἐξηλείψατε· οἱ νυνὶ μένουσιν ἐν τῇ πόλει πιστεύοντες ὑμῖν, ὧ ἄνδρες. And., I (*De myst.*) 76, also records the decree of Patrokleides, who ordered the erasure of the decrees against the *atimoi* in an attempt at social harmony initiated in the year 405. On the processes of destruction and erasure, see also the concise and sound observations of P. J. Rhodes, “Public Documents”, cit., p. 136 ff., with especial attention to the subject of archiving. On writing, in relation to archiving, and also with reference to the erasure of texts, see also L. Boffo, “Ancora una volta sugli “archivi” nel mondo greco: conservazione e “pubblicazione” epigrafica”, *Athenaeum*, 83, 1995, pp. 91-130.

385/384, with reaffirmation of hereditary proxeny.¹² The date of inscription, established by the mention of the archon and confirmed by palaeographic and linguistic factors, is certain. The conclusion that it is a reaffirmation, rather than a first affirmation, results from sound inference based on an evident contrast with lines 9-14, where a formula typical of a harsh imperialism emerges, a formula which would not have been accommodated following the Peace of Antalkidas.¹³ In 385/384, therefore, a document belonging to the 5th century was reinscribed, a document which was evidently missing and in need of valorisation once more for the political community whose strategy, then as now, was an anti-Syracusan entente with the Sicel element of Sicily. The formula of approval relating to the decree of the year 385/384, which contains reference to the *Boule* alone, also confirms the reinscription hypothesis. The combination, in fact, of the expression ἔδοξεν τῇ βουλῇ with a chronology tending towards the beginning of the 4th century may indicate a simplification of the path to approval of the decree. In such circumstances, a *de facto* reaffirmation of decisions that had already been taken would have been subject to the opinion of the Council alone; so, in the final years of the 5th century, we can only imagine that the original decision had followed an orthodox route, with final approval by the Assembly.¹⁴ If the procedural irregularity observable in the simple formula of approval confirms the hypothesis previously advanced regarding the reinscription of the document, the chronology of the

¹² IG, I³, 228, with commentary by E. Culasso Gastaldi, "IG I³ 228: Atene, Siracusa e i Siculi", in *Hesperia*, 5. *Studi sulla grecità di Occidente*, Roma, 1995, pp. 145-162.

¹³ It is hardly necessary to mention that the whole text seems to be cut by the same hand. The reference to the *kratos* that the Athenians exercised over the cities of the empire constitutes a reliable indication of a 5th century date: on this subject see R. Meiggs, "A Note on Athenian Imperialism", *CR*, 63, 1949, pp. 9-12; H. B. Mattingly, "The Language of Athenian Imperialism", *Epigraphica*, 36, 1974, pp. 33-51; for an enumeration of recurrences in the 5th and 4th centuries, see S. Koch, "Verstieß der Antrag der Aristokrates (Dem. 23, 91) gegen die Gesetze?", *ZRG*, 106, 1989, pp. 549-551.

¹⁴ An analogous case of probable destruction of the stele and of subsequent re-inscription may also be documented in the decree for Aristetas, Achaean *proxenos* of Aigion, the text of which has been recently restored thanks to M. Walbank, "Notes on Attic Decrees", *ABSA*, 85, 1990, pp. 435-436, nr. 1 (cf. *SEG*, XL, 54, 55), from the fragments previously edited as *IG*, II², 13 (+ *Add.* p. 655), 68 and *Hesperia*, 40, 1971, pp. 149-150, nr. 3 (Stroud). The document is characterised by a chronology fixed to 399/398 by archontal dating and by the simple formula of approval limited to the *Boule* alone. For other documentation see also *IG*, II², 49 = E. Culasso Gastaldi, *Prossenie*, cit., nr. 3, a decree for two families of *proxenoi* from Abydos, characterised by the same recurrence of the elements shown above. One case of re-publication, whose motives still elude analysis, is evidenced by *SEG*, XXXIX, 15; XLI, 9: the initial inscription is datable to the year 422/421 (Archon Alkaios), but it was rewritten in around the year 403 BC; see also A. P. Matthaiou, in *Acts of the First International Symposium on Siphnos* (in Greek), Athens, 2000, pp. 239-248 (*non vidi*), with commentary by Gauthier, *Bull. Ep.*, 2001, nr. 157. A hypothesis of re-inscription subsequent to destruction may also be formulated in relation to the honorary inscription for the Samians: composed of three decrees, it was inscribed at the same time by the *grammateus* Kephisophon Paianieus; of the three texts, the first (*IG*, I³, 127) was approved in 405/404, with the order for inscription expressed at lines 39-40; the second and third (*IG*, II², 1) were decided in two different prytanies of the year 403/402, with the order for inscription of the final decree at lines 66-67. A different case, however, is represented by the honorary decree for Dionysios of Syracuse and his family in the year 393 (*IG*, II², 18 = Tod, 108; cf. *SEG*, XXXVII, 66; XXXIX, 324; XLV, 231); it presents a formula ε.τ.β., but as has already been postulated by P. J. Rhodes, *The Athenian Boule*, Oxford, 1972, pp. 84, 247, it is an example of a *probouleuma*, or an independent decree of the *Boule*, already preceded by a decree of the Assembly, without any connection with the phenomena of destruction already observed.

decree enables the phenomenon to be attributed to the destructive intervention of the tyranny of the Thirty.¹⁵

Analysis of several epigraphical documents relating to the family of Apeimantos of Thasos leads to the same conclusions. Apeimantos has been identified as a militant pro-Athenian, involved in the events of constitutional change in Thasos in the year 411, when the *Demos* was dissolved at the instigation of the oligarchic government of Athens.¹⁶ At this point in time, he and other members of his family suffered confiscation of property as a punishment for actively opposing the new regime that had been established on the island.¹⁷ In the subsequent events, which brought the city again under the control of an Athens newly returned to possession of its democratic constitution, or immediately after when a harsh Spartan rule was imposed on the island, the sons of Apeimantos were nominated *proxenoi* by Athens.¹⁸ Their honorary stele, however, was destroyed in the year 404/403 at the time of the Thirty tyrants, as is clearly legible on the stele, inscribed soon after, with which the democracy, now definitively and stably in power, makes reparation for the damages of the preceding regime by the restoration of the stone symbol. “For Amyntor and Eurypylos and Argaios and Lokros and Alkymos, sons of Apeimantos, because the stele upon which their proxeny was inscribed was destroyed by the Thirty, it shall be the responsibility of the secretary of the *Boule* to have the stele inscribed at the expense of Eurypylos.”¹⁹ The initiative, welcomed by the Athenian *Demos*, was, however, advocated

¹⁵ A slightly different case is represented by the inscription *IG*, II², 12 + *Add.* p. 655 = *IG*, I³, 98; cf. *ML*², 80; M. Walbank, *Proxemies*, cit., nr. 75; R. Develin, *Athenian Officials, 684-321 B.C.*, New York, 1989, pp. 191-192; H. A. Reiter, *Athen und die Poleis des Delisch-Attischen Seebundes. Die Proxenoï und Euergetai des Attischen Demos in den Poleis des Delisch-Attischen Seebundes im Licht der attischen Proxenie- und Euergesiebeschlüsse des 5. Jahrhunderts v.Chr.*, Regensburg, 1991, nr. 20. The decree preserves, at lines 3-28, a decree of the 5th century, which conferred on Pythophanes of Karystos the honour of the inscription of a previous proposal by which he had already been granted the privileges of proxeny and *euergesia* and to which was then added the privilege of *asylia*. Of the first decree, approved at an indeterminate point in the 5th century, traces of lines 1-2 are perhaps preserved, according to the hypothesis of A. Wilhelm, “Fünf Beschlüsse der Athener”, *JÖAI*, 21-22, 1922-1924, pp. 123-172. The second decree was supplementary to the first, as is proved by lines 27-28. The typical language of the Empire (line 17: ἄλλοθι ποῶν Ἀθηναῖοι κ[ρατοῦσιν]; line 22: ὅσης Ἀθηναῖοι [κρατοῦσιν]) proves a chronology in the 5th century. In 399/398, a third decree was added to the stone, cut by a different hand to that of the preceding decree and introducing the simple formula of approval (lines 29-32). The year of approval suggests that the initiative had been taken by a democratic government, while the approval by the Council alone suggests the possibility that the document affirms a simple renewal of decisions that had been approved earlier. The change in the hand of the stonecutter, however, does not permit a hypothesis that, with the final provision, the inscription of the earlier decrees was also approved, and therefore there does not seem to be sufficient basis confidently to posit a traumatic destruction in the period of the Thirty Tyrants, for which the final decree intends to make reparation.

¹⁶ *Thuc.* VIII, 64, 2; cf. 48, 5.

¹⁷ *IG*, XII, 8, 263. That he belongs to a family of democratic pro-Athenians is proved by the presence in the same context of another individual who bears as a personal name the same patronymic indicator (line 10); a third person, also named Apeimantos, declares a provenance from Neapolis (line 13).

¹⁸ On the conquest of Thasos by the Athenian Thrasyboulos in the year 407 see *Xen., Hell.*, I, 4, 9; cf. *Diod.*, XIII, 72, 1. Lysandros seizes the island in October 405, massacring the pro-Athenians and imposing a Spartan garrison there: see *Nep., Lys.*, II, 2; III, 1; cf. *Plut., Lys.*, 13, 5.

¹⁹ *IG*, II², 6 + *Add.* p. 655; cf. *ML*², 83; M. Walbank, *Proxemies*, cit., nr. 61; the epigraphical documentation relating to Thasian events has recently been restored with commentary by Y. Grandjean, Fr. Salviat, “Décret d’Athènes restaurant la démocratie à Thasos en 407 BC. *IG*, XII 8,

by one of the sons of Apeimantos in Athens, who also bore the cost of the inscription.²⁰ With regard to this clear example of the Thasian *proxenoi*, it must also be observed that, in this case also, the formula of approval is limited to the *Boule*, which had sole responsibility for the decision to re-write a document which had existed formerly, but which had then been afflicted by the oligarchic *damnatio memoriae*.

This iconoclastic fury was, as already stated, politically motivated, and may be considered all the more so with the proof of the long-running fidelity of the family of the Thasian *proxenoi* to the Athenian democracy. A later Attic decree, datable to the 380s, concedes *ateleia* to a group of exiles fleeing from Thasos and records, among other names, that of Amyntor, son of Apeimantos. Those honoured are clearly partisans compromised during the brief democratic interlude secured by the Athenian Thrasyboulos in the year 390/389, who were as a consequence considered outlaws by the pro-Spartan government which ruled the island at the beginning of the 4th century.²¹ An important observation at this juncture, and one that also leads to a better understanding of the phenomenon of the destruction of the stele by the Thirty tyrants, is that the son of Apeimantos was banished ἐπὶ Ἀττικισμῷ, for Atticism, i.e. for his fidelity to the Athenian democracy.²²

In the context of Athenian politics of the end of 4th century, other occurrences of the destruction of epigraphic artefacts document episodes of violent institutional instability within the civic body itself. As a result of Macedonian pressure, Athens experienced, as already noted, a three-year oligarchic period following defeat in the Lamian war. Subsequently, for one short year, the city returned in 319/318 to its traditional democratic constitution before succumbing to the rule of Demetrios of Phaleron. It was precisely in this brief democratic interlude that the Assembly approved and inscribed an extraordinary document which constitutes effective evidence for the oligarchic *damnatio memoriae* promoted by the regime of Antipater. The honoured individual, Euphron of Sikyon, was rewarded with Athenian citizenship for having brought his city, as first of the Peloponnesian *poleis*, to fight on behalf of the Athenians during the Lamian war.²³ Two inscribed copies of the decree, approved between December and January of the year 323/322, were displayed in different and prestigious sacred spaces, in “open air public display”,²⁴ serving as stone symbols attesting to the will to fight against the Macedonians in the “Hellenic war”. The succeeding pro-Macedonian government decreed its destruction, following the well-known custom, as the epigraphical text, which was approved in the December of 318 by the new ruling democracy, recounts in detail. The document, of interest also for the biographical detail of its narrative, retraces the steps of Euphron’s political activity, revisiting the choices made by the honoured in order to commemorate them, the intention being to reaffirm the legitimacy of the work of the Athenian *Demos*. It is necessary to grasp, in this decision to fight against the Macedonians, the close identification established between the collective *bios* of the Attic political community and the personal history of Euphron, as a means of understanding, in a parallel fashion, the true

262 complété (Les abords Nord-Est de l’agora de Thasos I)”, *BCH*, 112, 1988, pp. 249-278. For a political reading of the texts, see A. Gerolymatos, *Espionage and Treason. A Study of the Proxenia in Political and Military Intelligence Gathering in Classical Greece*, Amsterdam, 1986, pp. 48-53.

²⁰ His presence in Athens is also easily deducible from the invitation extended to him to hospitality at the prytaneion (lines 16-19).

²¹ Cf. Demosth. XX (*Contra Lept.*), 59-60.

²² *IG*, II², 33, especially lines 6-7 for the reference to Atticism and line 26 for the record of the son of Apeimantos.

²³ *IG*, II², 448, especially lines 9-12 for the reasons.

²⁴ For use of the cited expression, see R. Thomas, *Literacy*, cit., p. 34.

meaning of the destruction of the stele. Because garrisons were imposed on those cities of Greece that were militarily unsuccessful, Euphron is revered for having preferred “to die ... fighting for democracy rather than see his own homeland and the rest of Greece in slavery” (lines 52-6). Here the level of empathy with the experience of Athens clearly emerges which, at a distance of only four years from the events, rethinks its own past experience.²⁵ This amalgamation of the individual and collective planes is made explicitly clear in the following passage, where the discourse turns to domestic Athenian politics, and concerns the ultimate fate of the epigraphical text. “Those who governed in the oligarchy”, we read, “stripped him of privileges and destroyed the stelai; now, however, because the *Demos* has been restored and has re-established laws and democracy, with good fortune, the *Demos* shall decide that all privileges shall be returned to Euphron ... and that the secretary of the *Boule* shall inscribe and display the stelai which were uprooted and upon which were inscribed the privileges and the *psephisma*” (lines 60-68). The *Demos* also wanted to specify punctiliously that the new epigraphical artefacts should be returned to exactly the same places of display as the former stelai, at the temple of Zeus Soter and at the temple of Athena Polias on the Acropolis, “as the People had previously decreed” (lines 70-71), in a scrupulous attempt to reaffirm the past, erasing, at the same time, an interregnum which they wished officially to condemn to oblivion. In the order given for the reinscription the Assembly specified that on both monuments there should be inscribed, in addition (προσαναγράψαι) to the original honorary decree, the provision for restoration, to which we are indebted for all of the information about these events.²⁶

The phenomenon of destruction and of reinstatement of a stele is also documented in relations between Athens and its allies; in the context of *stasis* between pro-Athenians and their opponents, the act of tearing down epigraphic artefacts bearing sworn treaties with

²⁵ The theme of the struggle for freedom was dramatically developed already by Hyper., *Epit.*, 10-1, 16 (*bis*), 19, 24, 34, 37, 40, for the fallen of the first year of the war, to be reprised in analogous terms by Demochares in the request for honours for Demosthenes, on which see [Plut.], *Mor. (X orat. vit.)*, 851 C.

²⁶ For further commentary on the events referred to here, please see E. Culasso Gastaldi, “Eroi della città: Eufrone di Sicione e Licurgo di Atene”, in *Modelli eroici dall'antichità alla cultura europea. Atti del Convegno Internazionale in onore di Ph. Stadter*, Bergamo, 2003, pp. 65-98, especially 66-68. Another interesting case of hypothesised *damnatio memoriae* has recently been discussed by S. D. Lambert, “The only Extant Decree of Demosthenes”, *ZPE*, 137, 2001, pp. 55-68, especially 58, 67-68, which draws attention to the disproportion between the large number of decrees attributed to Demosthenes in the tradition (thirty-nine according the calculation of M. H. Hansen, “The Number of Rhetores in the Athenian Ecclesia, 355-322 B.C.”, *GRBS*, 25, 1984, p. 133 [= *The Athenian Ecclesia*, II, Copenhagen, 1989, p.103]) and the rarity of epigraphical testimonies that preserve a record of his role as proposer. Only two testimonies are in fact identified and commented on by S. D. Lambert, *ibid.*, and Id., “On IG II², 546”, *ZPE*, 141, 2002, pp. 117-122, who does not consider, however, that the material evidence proves that a political condemnation was carried out on the stone materials, contrary to what is hypothesised by T. Reinach, “Pierres qui roulent”, *REG*, 13, 1900, p. 169. The inscription IG, II², 11960 (dated to the middle of the 3rd century BC) ultimately records a singular episode of erasure which indicates a possible political intentionality. The text, incised on the lower part of the stele following the chiselling away of the pre-existing text, records the valiant death of Leon, killed while defending the cleruchs of Salamis (see L. Moretti, *Iscrizioni storiche ellenistiche. Testo critico, traduzione e commento*, I, Firenze, 1967, pp. 50-51, nr. 24; cf. Chr. Habicht, *Athens from Alexander to Antony*, Cambridge Mass.-London, 1997, p. 162); the text which was chiselled away consisted, however, of a decree of the inhabitants of Salamis, approved during a brief interlude of independence from Athens (end of 4th – beginning of 3rd century) according to A. Wilhelm, *JÖAI*, 12, 1909, p. 135; cf. Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'inscriptions grecques, Supplément*, Bruxelles, 1912, nr. 1509.

Athens signifies a rejection of the alliance with Athens and the establishment of new agreements in the context of a general attitude characterised by an acrimonious desire for νεωτερίζειν. The case here concerns the city of Iulis on the island of Keos during the events of the rebellion of the year 363/362, when its inhabitants destroyed the stelai on which were inscribed the agreements established after an earlier rebellion. This earlier rebellion, in which all of the island cities participated, and which had been quelled by Athens the previous year, had seen the murder of the Athenian *proxenos*. At the conclusion of the second rebellion, of which Iulis was the sole protagonist and to which the epigraphical text refers, the Assembly resolved to re-inscribe the destroyed treaties, which were in fact inscribed at the end of the final peace treaty.²⁷

The destruction of a stele, a characteristic feature of situations of political instability, is observable in Samos, which housed a large group of Athenian cleruchs in the years 365-321 BC. The deep hatred of the original inhabitants for Athens, forced for decades into exile in areas bordering their homeland, is clearly intelligible in Samian epigraphy: in the brief period between the summer of 324, when the royal proclamation on the return of the political exiles was announced at Olympia, and the months following the death of Alexander, their attempts to attack the Athenian garrisons multiplied, until the order of Perdiccas to restore the Samians' territory overcame the military resistance of Athens.²⁸ The wrath of the exiles, newly in possession of the island, crashed down upon a monument that represents the very essence of the Athenian cleruchy: of great documentary value, it is a list of *bouleutai* in which two hundred and fifty names of the cleruchs

²⁷ *IG*, II², 111 = Tod, 142 = *Staatsverträge*, 289. On the decision to re-inscribe the destroyed treaties, see lines 17-23; on the text of the same, lines 57 ff.; on the murder of the Athenian *proxenos* lines 37-41; for the reference to νεωτερίζειν line 62. For observations on the decree see J. Cargill, *The Second Athenian League. Empire or Free Alliance?* Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1981, pp. 61, 138-140; M. Dreher, *Hegemon und Symmachoi: Untersuchungen zum zweiten athenischen Seebund*, Berlin, 1995, pp. 120-124. For an interpretation of the complex succession of events in relation to the epigraphical documentation, see B. Guagliumi, *Lotte politiche e metapolai in Grecia nel IV secolo a. C.*, Research doctorate in Ancient Historical Sciences, University of Genoa, academic year 2002-2003, pp. 82-95, which evaluates how the uprising, not noted by any literary source, may have joined a coalition with the power of Thebes, guided by Epaminondas.

²⁸ On the foundation of the cleruchy under the guidance of Timotheus see Demosth., XV (*De Rhod. lib.*), 9; Isocr., XV (*Antid.*), 108; 111; [Arist.], *Oec.*, 1350 b, 4-15; Polyae., III, 9. On subsequent colonial reinforcements see *schol. ad. Aeschin.*, I (*In Timarch.*), 53 (361/360); Philoch., *ap. Dion. Hal.*, *De Din.*, 13 = *FGrHist*, 328 F 154 (352/351); Cic., *Nat.*, I, 72. Cf. R. Sealey, *Demosthenes and His Time. A Study in Defeat*, New York-Oxford, 1993, pp. 88, 106; J. Cargill, *Athenian Settlements of the Fourth Century B. C.*, Leiden-New York-Köln, 1995, pp. 17-21; P. Debord, *L'Asie Mineure au IV^e siècle (412-323 a. C.). Pouvoirs et jeux politiques*, Bordeaux, 1999, pp. 290-4 (with further bibliographic references) and now, most recently, *IG*, XII, 6, 1, pp. 204-205. On the ἐπιστολὴ περὶ τῆς καθόδου, read aloud at the Olympic Games of 324, see Din., I (*In Demosth.*), 81; Hyper., I (*In Demosth.*), col. 18; Diod., XVIII, 8, 3-5. Cf. R. Sealey, "The Olympic Festivals of 324 B.C.", *CR*, 10, 1960, pp. 185-186; on the historical period under discussion, G. Shipley, *A History of Samos 800-188 B.C.*, Oxford, 1987, pp. 155-168. The documentation relating to the attempt of the Samians to re-enter the island and the military reaction of Athens can be found in *IG*, XII, 6, 1, 42-43. For definitive remarks on the understanding of the texts, see E. Badian, "A Comma in the History of Samos", *ZPE*, 23, 1976, pp. 289-294; K. Hallof, "Im Schatten des Vaters. Die Neuen Fragmente zum samischen Ehrendekret für Antileon aus Chalkis und seinen Sohn Leontinos (AM 72, 1957, 156 nr. 1)", *Chiron*, 28, 1998, pp. 43-51. On the restitution to the Samians of their island by order of Perdiccas, which after the conclusion of the Lamian war (winter or spring 321) could no longer be postponed, cf. Diod., XVIII, 18, 6; 9.

constituting the Council of the island were preserved: only two hundred of these may still be deciphered as a result of erasure and the general damage suffered by this document.²⁹

The verb καθαιρεῖν seems, therefore, to be employed to describe the act of destruction, of tearing down and dismantling the physical stele, but with reference to the words written upon it and to the deep semiotic valence of the monument. The violent act of destruction or of change that is effectuated against the stele, as well as its counterpart and successor, the act of rewriting an earlier *psephisma*, both rest on the same assumption: that the stele, as stated, does not *recall* but *is* the political action itself that has been written. In the decree approved for the foundation of the colony at Brea, around the middle of the 5th century, hereditary *atimia* and confiscation of property is imposed “if anyone puts a proposal to the vote that goes *against the stele* (παρὰ τὴν στήλην) or if an orator speaks to the Assembly or intends to urge someone to erase or violate the approved resolutions”.³⁰ In ancient epigraphical writing, the lexicon which expresses the act of annulling previous decisions is enhanced by new words and phrases, such as the verb ἀφαιρείσθαι or the expression λύειν τι τῶν ἐψηφισμένων, to express the will to erase decisions which are identifiable with the written word, with reference to the physical context of the stele where it is inscribed. To speak “against the stele” is the same as saying “against this decree”,³¹ as we read again in the text of an agreement, dating back to the twenties of the 5th century, with the Chalcidian population of Aphitos: the act is evidence of a desire to cancel which may also follow official paths and be achieved with the assent of the Assembly in a period

²⁹ The inscription, datable to the middle of the 4th century, was first edited by K. Hallof, Chr. Habicht “Buleuten und Beamte der athenischen Kleruchie in Samos”, *MDAI(A)*, 110, 1995, pp. 273-304 and may now be consulted in *IG*, XII, 6, 1, 262 (cf. p. 222: *Titulus... cleruchis expulsus consulto erasus est post a. 322 a.*).

³⁰ *IG*, I³, 46 = ML², 49, lines 24-29: ἐ]ὰν δέ τις ἐπιφσεφίζει παρὰ τὲ[ν στέ]λεν ἔ] ῥρέ]τορ ἀγορεύει ἔ] προσκαλῆσθαι[ι ἐγχε]ρ[ε]ῖ ἀφαι]ρῆσθαι ἔ] λύεν τι τῶν ἡφσεφ[ισμένων], | [ἄ]τιμον] ἔ]ναι αὐτὸν καὶ παῖδας τὸς ἐχς [ἐκέν]ο | | [καὶ τὰ χ]ρέματα δεμόσια ἔ]ναι καὶ τῆς [θεῶ το] ἐπιδέκα]τον. An analogous lexical case is found in *IG*, I³, 1454, lines 20-27, the decree for the Eteokarpathians, who gave the cypress to the temple of the goddess Athena; see the recent commentary in T. Alfieri Tonini, “Il decreto ateniese per Carpatò” (*IG*, I³, 1454A). Una proposta di interpretazione”, in *XI Congresso internazionale di epigrafia greca e latina (Roma, 18-24 settembre 1997)*. *Atti*, Roma, 1999, pp. 157-165.

³¹ *IG*, I³, 63, lines 2-3. Ancient sources, including those of a literary nature, frequently emphasise the interchangeability of the two concepts: see Demosth., XX (*Contra Lept.*), 36, 127-128. For an extension of this same sensibility to non-Athenian documentation, see the monetary treaty between Mytilene and Phokaia in Tod, 112 (beginning 4th century B. C.), where the validity of a decision is evaluated in relation to what the two cities have written on the stele or have cut ([ὅ]τι | δέ κε αἰ] πόλις [ἀ]μφότ[εραι --- | --- γράφωσι εἰς τὰν [στάλλαν ἢ ἐκκλό]άπ]τωισι, κύριον ἔ]στω); in a Boeotian context, see the decree of Tanagra *IG*, VII, 529, lines 4-5, where the same privileges are extended to the honoured person which have been *written* for the other *proxenoi* and *euergetai* (τᾶλλα πάντα καθάπερ τῆς ἄλλης προξένους κῆ] | εὐεργέτης τᾶς πόλιος γέγραπτη); for Cretan documentation see *IC*, 3, III, 4, lines 5-7 (beginning 2nd century BC), where, in the treaty between Hierapytna and Priansos, the contracting parties undertake by common consent to remain faithful “to pre-existing stelai” (τάδε συνέθε[ντο καὶ συνευ]ιδόκησαν ἀλλάλοις Ἱεραπύτνιοι καὶ Πριάνσιοι [ἐμμένον]τες ἐν ταῖς προϋπαρχώσαις στάλαις). The epigraphical text attesting the renewal of the treaties of Athens with Iulis, a city on the island of Keos, for which see *IG*, II², 111 = Tod, 142, shows at lines 17-23 how public display gives power and authority to the agreements, almost to the point that legislative recognition is inherent in the very act of inscription and display rather than in the approval itself.

of institutional stability. This act may necessitate complex operations of revision of a city's own past with corrections of earlier attitudes which were once ratified by the will of the People but are now no longer congruent with the frames of reference of the present time. It does not exactly constitute a process of *damnatio memoriae*, but is certainly a physical act of self-censorship originating from within the civic body, not with ideological aims, but rather born of political opportunism. An excellent example of this public self-criticism, implemented at the highest level, is found in the text of the so-called decree of Aristoteles, with which Athens formalised, in the seventh prytany of the year 378/377, the reconstitution of its maritime league. In an admirable effort to rebuild by skill and sagacity a hegemonic *symmachia*, even in the context of the existence of an international agreement imposed by the Great King that expressly prohibited *symmachiai*, Athens created an alliance on an equal footing, at least in its intentions, which reinvented the past and renounced one by one the authoritarian attitudes which had characterised the preceding era. According to the new spirit of the time, the Assembly assured all the cities wanting to become allies of their right to live in liberty and autonomy, according to a constitution of their choice and without the imposition of garrisons, the acceptance of rulers, or the payment of any tribute. To those who joined the alliance, the *Demos* would restore any property in the territory of the contracting parties that may have been taken by the Athenians, either privately or publicly. Then, in particular, “where in Athens there may be stelai ἀνεπιτήδαιοι against any of the cities who have made a covenant with Athens, the *Boule* in office is entrusted with the mandate to tear them down”.³²

Here the verb καθαίρειν describes an official task of revision that must be undertaken by the express will of the same city which approved the initiatives now under attack.³³ This process of political adjustment is achieved through the physical destruction of the stelai which are ἀνεπιτήδαιοι or incongruent: namely those which are untimely, unfavourable or even hostile to one of the cities of the alliance. The rules which were laid down by the Great King in the year 387/386 impose also on Athens the observance of the Common Peace, which profoundly influenced the regulation of international law through revolutionary political concepts of liberty and autonomy.³⁴ We are in some way witnessing, therefore, a form of endogenous revisionism that does not occur due to a change of political hegemony and is thus not intended to intervene in a partisan vision of its political past; to be precise, it is rather an improper form of revisionism carried out, at least in intention,

³² IG, II², 43 = Tod, 123, especially lines 19-35. For commentary on the inscription and the alliances presupposed by the text, see J. Cargill, *The Second Athenian League*, Berkeley, 1981, especially pp. 143-144 on the cited provision.

³³ Within a constitutional context of change sought by the city, a monetary law was also introduced in the year 375/374 (cf. R. S. Stroud, “An Athenian Law on Silver Coinage”, *Hesperia*, 43, 1974, pp. 158-188, with further bibliographical references in *SEG*, XLV, 44, 232; XLVI, 119; XLVII, 121; XLVIII, 95, 2134; with attention to the relationship of the allies see M. Dreher, *Hegemon*, cit., p. 90 ff.), which makes provision at lines 44-5 for the inscription of the new laws and at lines 55-6 for the destruction of every stele which is contrary to them (εἰ δὲ τι ψήφισμα γέγραπται ποῦ ἐστὶ ληγὴ πρὸς τὸν νόμον, καθελέτω ὁ γραμματεὺς τῆς βουλῆς).

³⁴ For a historical discussion of the events referred to here see T. T. B. Ryder, *Koine Eirene. General Peace and Local Independence in Ancient Greece*, London-New York-Toronto, 1965; R. Urban, *Der Königsfrieden von 387/86 v. Chr. Vorgeschichte, Zustandkommen, Ergebnis und Politische Umsetzung*, Stuttgart, 1991. IG, II², 43 = Tod, 123, preserves at lines 12-15 the traces of an erasure, in which an allusion to the Peace of the Great King, which was subject to erasure as a result of historical events, may be seen; cf. J. Cargill, *League*, cit., pp. 16-17, 28-32, with a discussion of earlier literature; P. J. Rhodes, “Public Documents”, cit., p. 137.

within the civic body itself; the *Demos*, which is not different, from an institutional point of view, from in the 5th century, desires, for reasons of political expediency, to meet the changing needs of the contemporary world.

A slightly different motivation is suggested by the text of the treaty between the Athenians and the Kephallonians in the year 375 or 372, with which the second maritime league expanded to admit new western allies. After a clause of military character, the Assembly ordered the dual action of tearing down (καθελόντων) and erasing (ἐξαλειψάντων) each extant physical document, wherever it was displayed. This decision evidently originated from the acknowledgement that all legislation previously in force between the two communities should now be considered obsolete and, therefore, no longer useful or deserving conservation.³⁵

Revision was the clear aim driving the city in the year 361/360, when the treasurers of the goddess Athena were ordered, as guardians of the Acropolis, to tear down the stele that bore the inscription of the text of the alliance that had been sworn, only seven years earlier, with the Thessalian Alexander of Pherai.³⁶ The act of καθαιρεῖν carried out against the stele is intended to correct a political error of judgement that the stone monument, through its very physicality, continues to represent. In the year 368/367, in fact, during the Theban expansion into Thessaly, Alexander had requested that Athens form a military alliance against the common enemy; the city had readily joined with a considerable deployment of men and equipment.³⁷ So, as Demosthenes caustically recalls in the year 352, even though Alexander had made Pelopidas a prisoner and was the worst enemy of the Thebans, he was on such familiar terms with the Athenians that he was able to ask them for a *strategos* for the prosecution of the war. In Athens, nothing else was spoken of and, to use the words of the orator, πάντῃ ἦν Ἀλέξανδρος: essentially, “Alexander here and Alexander there”; this dangerous alliance was the talk of the day.³⁸ But in 364/363, the tyrant of Pherai was forced by Theban military superiority to enter into an alliance with the Boeotians, rescinding the previous *symmachia* with Athens and organising acts of piracy and military expeditions against the city’s allies. The onslaught advanced even closer in the year 362/361, reaching as far as to strike, as information from Polyainos seems to testify, at the

³⁵ *IG*, II², 98, lines 9-13: ὅπόσοι δὲ νό[μοι ἐσὶ ? περὶ Ἀθηναίων κείμενοι καὶ Κεφαλλήνων, κα]καθελόντων [οἱ ἄρχοντες καὶ ἐξαλ]λειψάντων ἀπανταχόθεν ἐπάνγκ[λει]ς; cf. *SEG*, XXXI, 66; *Staatsverträge*, 267. See also *IG*, II², 96 = *Staatsverträge*, 262. On the character of Kephallonia’s membership of the league see J. Cargill, *League*, cit., pp. 43, 103 ff. On the historical events see also M. Dreher, *Hegemon*, cit., pp. 12 ff.

³⁶ *IG*, II², 116 = Tod, 147, lines 39-40: τῇν δὲ στ[ή]λ[ην τῇν] πρὸ[ς] Ἀλ[έξα]νδ[ρ]ον [κα]θελ[εῖ]ν τὸς ἰ [ταμίας] τῆς Θεῶ [τὴν] περ[ὶ] τῆς [σ]υμμαχία[ς]; on the iconographic decoration of the monument cf. M. Meyer, *Die griechischen Urkundenreliefs*, Berlin, 1989, A 59; C. L. Lawton, *Attic Document Reliefs*, Oxford, 1995, A 25; on the organisation of the Thessalian state see B. Helly, *L’état thessalien. Aleuas le Roux, les tetrads et les tagoi*, Lyon, 1995; on the political operations of Alexander, cf. H. D. Westlake, *Thessaly in the Fourth Century B. C.*, London, 1935, pp. 126-159; M. Sordi, *La lega tessala*, Roma, 1958, pp. 193-234; on the Theban intervention in Thessaly, see J. Buckler, *The Theban Hegemony, 371-362 BC*, Cambridge Mass.-London, 1980, pp. 110-129, 245-249.

³⁷ Diod., XV, 71, 3-4.

³⁸ Demosth., XXIII (*In Aristocr.*), 120; the name of the *strategos* sent by the Athenians, Autokles, is recorded by Diodorus (see preceding note); the record of the amity between the Athenians and Alexander occurs also in *Mor. (Reg. et imp. apophth.)* 193 D-E. Plut., *Pelop.*, 31, 6, records the accusations that the Athenians had placed themselves in Alexander’s pay and that they had erected a bronze statue to him as though he were a benefactor.

port of Piraeus.³⁹ Following the notorious death of Epaminondas in the battle of Mantinea, the Thessalians feared the growing freedom with which Alexander was acting and, in order to preserve the autonomy of the *koinon*, formally requested an alliance with the Athenians. The Assembly, therefore, recognising their lack of foresight in having signed the earlier agreements, ordered, after only seven years, the destruction of the stelai relating to the agreements with the Pheraean tyrant.⁴⁰

The phenomena examined up to this point are relevant above all to the 5th and 4th centuries BC, but other similar occurrences may even occur back as far as the archaic period, when, in the struggles between aristocratic factions, the Alkmaionids were repeatedly the object of public execration for the sacrilege relating to the massacre of the Kylonians.⁴¹ Furthermore, after the banishment of the Peisistratids, in an Athens still torn by *stasis* between opposing factions, the ancient Alkmaionid curse converged with the political vendetta of their adversaries, led by Isagoras; Thucydides recalls that the Athenians “exiled the living and disinterred the bones of the dead and threw them outside the city”.⁴² This picture of dispersal, when seen in conjunction with the information from Herodotos that fully seventy percent of the families related to the Alkmaionids also took the route of exile,⁴³ suggests that acts of destruction or erasure of epigraphical writing probably also occurred. The damage observable today in the documents of the archaic period may not be unequivocally interpreted as intentional tampering, with *damnatio memoriae* as its aim, since the Persian sack of Athens in 480 and the reuse of much stone material in the construction of the Themistoklean wall suggest that alterations and cuttings of stones may also have occurred as a consequence of acts of war or of reuse in construction.⁴⁴ One indication of our lack of documentary evidence is a significant episode, documented solely by the literary tradition. The historical context is the years in which Athens, recently liberated from the tyranny of the Peisistratids, sought stability between opposing factions and struggled against Medism in the face of the advancing Persian threat, and to keep their own independence, notwithstanding the strong ties that the aristocracy still had with the

³⁹ On Alexander’s renunciation of the principality of the Thessalians and on the alliance with the Boeotians, see Diod., XV, 80; Plut., *Pelop.*, 35, 3; on the military aid supplied to the Boeotians in the Battle of Mantinea, Xen., *Hell.*, VII, 5, 4; on the acts of piracy carried out against the allies of the Athenians, Xen., *Hell.*, VI, 4, 35; [Demosth.], L (*Contra Polykl.*), 4; on victory at the expense of the Athenians in the waters of Peparethos, Diod., XV, 95; on the *coup de main* against Piraeus, Polyain., VI, 2, 2.

⁴⁰ In the same way Demosthenes obtained approval from the People for the proposal to destroy the stele relating to the peace of Philokrates with Philip, when the latter, in 340/339 attacked the Hellespont by surprise, seeking the capitulation of Byzantium. This decision simultaneously signified a general re-arming and the beginning of the war: see Philoch., *FGrHist* 328 F 55; there is reference to these same events in Diod., XVI, 77, 2; Plut. *Phoc.*, 14, 3-4. Cf. P. Carlier, *Démosthène*, Paris, 1990, pp. 194-204; R. Sealey, *Demosthenes*, cit., pp. 187-190. Similarly again Demosth., XVI, (*Pro Megal.*), 27, attests to the need for the Megalopolitans to tear down the stele bearing treaties with the Thebans to credibly demonstrate their willingness to obtain Athenian protection.

⁴¹ Thuc., I, 126, 3-12; Herod., V, 71; cf. *APF*, pp. 370-371.

⁴² Thuc., I, 126, 12.

⁴³ Herod., V, 72, 1; cf. [Arist.], *Ath. Pol.*, XX, 1-3.

⁴⁴ The documentation is discussed from an archaeological point of view by C. M. Keesling, “Endoios’s Painting from the Themistoklean Wall. A Reconstruction”, *Hesperia*, 68, 1999, pp. 509-548, especially 512-518, with reference to the base of Endoios, reused in the Themistoklean Wall; the inscription which runs along one of the four walls, bearing the name of the artist, is published as *IG*, I³, 1214.

past tyranny.⁴⁵ Lykourgos, in a notable testimony taken from the *Oration against Leokrates*, orders the public reading of the decree by which the Athenians resolved to destroy the bronze effigy of Hipparchos, son of Charmos, who belonged to the family of the tyrants and was the first to be ostracised in the year 487 BC. After melting down the bronze statue, the Athenians forged a bronze stele upon which were incised the names of the blasphemers and the traitors.⁴⁶ The stele of the traitors was certainly created as an instrument of struggle among the aristocratic factions who were competing to govern in the power vacuum left after the destruction of the tyranny, but it also illustrates the painstakingly acquired resolution to fight the Persians and to outlaw projects of *prodosia* conceived by significant sectors of the aristocratic faction.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ On the deep involvement of the ancient noble groups with the tyranny and with the creation, *post eventum*, of myths of resistance to the tyrant extolled in the ancient literary tradition, see R. Thomas, *Tradition*, cit., pp. 95 ff., 238 ff.; B. M. Lavelle, *The Sorrow and the Pity. A Prolegomenon to a History of Athens under the Peisistratids, c. 560-510 B. C.*, Stuttgart, 1993, pp. 27 ff. With reflections on the cultural codes of the ruling aristocracy and to its skilful adaptation to changing political conditions, see E. Stein-Hölkeskamp, *Adelskultur und Polis-gesellschaft. Studien zum griechischen Adel im archaischer und klassischer Zeit*, Stuttgart, 1989. The historical events of the year 508/507 have been recently examined by J. Ober, "The Athenian Revolution of 508/7 B. C. Violence, Authority and the Origin of Democracy", in C. Dougherty, L. Kurke ed., *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece. Cult, Performance, Politics*, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 214-232.

⁴⁶ Lyc., *Leoc.*, 117. On the ostracism of Hipparchos, see the fragments from the Agora published in *Agora*, XXV, pp. 48-49; for the documentation of the Kerameikos, limited to a sole example, cf. F. Willemsen, S. Brenne, "Verzeichnis der Kerameikos-Ostraka", *MDAI(A)*, 106, 1991, pp. 147-156, especially 151; S. Brenne, *Ostrakismos und Prominenz in Athen. Attische Bürger des 5. Jhs. v. Chr. auf den Ostraka*, Wien, 2001, cat. 98 and p. 376. The bronze stele may perhaps be linked with Thuc., VI, 55, 1-2, who attests to the existence on the Acropolis of a stele περὶ τῆς τῶν τυράννων ἀδικίας where the names of the tyrants were inscribed, firstly that of Peisistratos and then that of Hippias and of the other sons. On the role in Athens of the public writing of denunciation and on the destruction of the "stele of infamy" as a form of political amnesty, cf. relevant observations by J.-M. Bertrand, "De l'usage de l'épigraphie dans la cité des Magnètes platoniciens", in G. Thür, J. Vélissaropoulos-Karakostas ed., *Symposion 1995*, Wien, 1997, pp. 27-47, especially p. 38 ff. The evidence of Thuc., VI, 54, 6-7 relating to the erection by Peisistratos the Younger of an altar in the market place dedicated to the Twelve Gods also appears relevant in demonstrating intentional alterations carried out on an epigraphical artefact. The historian adds that the People later built an addition there and extended it, erasing the inscription of dedication; on the monument see H. A. Shapiro, *Art and Cult under the Tyrants in Athens*, Mainz am Rhein, 1989, pp. 133-141; S. Angiolillo, *Arte e cultura nell'Atene di Pisistrato e dei Pisistratidi: 'Ο ἐπὶ Κρόνου βίος*, Bari, 1997, pp. 22-24. In the same context, Thucydides records a second altar offered in honour of Apollo Pythios (H. A. Shapiro, *Art and Cult*, cit., pp. 50-51; S. Angiolillo, *Arte e cultura*, cit., p. 78), in remembrance of Peisistratos' archonship; the same ancient historian saw and faithfully described the inscription (still visible today and exhibited in the Epigraphical Museum; see the edition, *IG*, I³, 948) that, in his opinion, was written ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι. In general, see A. W. Gomme, A. Andrewes, K. J. Dover, *Commentary*, cit., pp. 331-333; the expression may indicate a deterioration of the original colouring (see O. Hansen, "On the Date of the Dedication of Pisistratus, Son of Hippias", *Kadmos*, 31, 1992, pp. 94-95) or, as hypothesised by B. M. Lavelle, "Thucydides and *IG* II² 948: amudrois grammasi", in R. Sutton ed., *Daidaskalion. Studies in Memory of Raymond V. Schoder*, Wauconda, 1989, pp. 207-212, a deliberate intervention to disguise the writing with mortar or plaster.

⁴⁷ On the accusation of *prodosia* raised against the Alkmaionids in the context of the battle of Marathon, see Her., VI, 115, 121, 123-124. On the decision to fight the Persians, painstakingly emerging in the decade 490-480 against the will of the Alkmaionids, who were suspected of

The same psychological mechanisms of correction and of rejection of one's own past, clearly represented by the destruction of an epigraphic artefact, are also detectable through the processes of simple erasure carried out on the writing surface. In contrast to destruction, erasure preserves for all time evident traces of the ends which were pursued, acting in some way to conserve the memory of that which is desired, on the contrary, to be condemned to oblivion. The epigraphic field, however, is not always left erased, as a clearly visible reminder of the curtailment of an agreement. Sometimes it is re-inscribed, which allows our understanding to be enhanced. A significant example of this is to be found in the honorary decree for the Neapolitans, colonists of the Thasians on the coast of Thrace.⁴⁸ The epigraphical document is composed of two decrees, of which the first dates back to the year 410/409 and the second to 407/406. The historical references relate to the years following the Athenian defeat in Sicily, when the city was fighting in the Aegean in defence of their last remaining possessions. The decree notes the events whereby Thasos abandoned the democratic constitution in 411, subsequently seceding from Athens in order to embrace the Spartan cause. The Neapolitans did not follow their homeland in this pro-Spartan choice and, on the contrary, collaborated over the years with the Athenian military effort which led Thrasyboulos to seize Thasos in the year 407.⁴⁹ In the first decree, the Neapolitans are in fact honoured "because despite being a colony of the Thasians, and although being besieged by them and by the Peloponnesians, they did not want to secede from the Athenians".⁵⁰ At lines 37-38, by virtue of the awards they had acquired as benefactors, direct access to the *Boule* and the Assembly is accordingly conceded to them. The second decree, approved after the successful conclusion of the expedition against Thasos, aims to record the services rendered by the Neapolitans precisely in the area of these acts of war, as the reasons given for the measure indicate: "since they undertook an expedition against Thasos and they participated together with the Athenians in the siege of the city, and since they fought together with them at sea and won, and fought with them by land at every opportunity" (lines 49-51).⁵¹ Within this *probouleuma* formulated by the Council, the Neapolitans, presumably present at the session because of the *prosodos* conceded to them by the previous decree, requested a substantial change to the text already incised on the stele, as we read at lines 58-59: "with regard to the earlier *psephisma*, the *grammateus* of the *Boule* shall correct (ἐπανορθῶσαι) and write in the place (μεταγράψαι) of the Thasian *apoikia* that (the Neapolitans) fought the war together with the Athenians".⁵² The meaning of the correction and the modification seems very clear, since lines 7-8 appear to have been erased and new text written into the erasure according

Medism, see E. Culasso Gastaldi, "I Filaidi tra Milziade e Cimone. Per una rilettura del decennio 490-480 a. C.", *Athenaeum*, 84, 1996, pp. 493-526.

⁴⁸ *IG*, I³, 101 = *ML*², 89.

⁴⁹ See above n. 16 and following.

⁵⁰ Lines 6-9: [ἐπ]αινέσαι τοῖς Νεοπ[ολίταις <τοῖς> | παρὰ Θάσον [πρῶτον μ]ὲν [[ὅτι ἄποικοι ὄντες Θασίων]] [καὶ πολιο]ρκόμενοι [[ὑπ' | αὐτῶν]] καὶ Πελο[ποννη]σίον οὐκ ἠθ[έλησαν ἀπο]στήνα[ι ἀπ' Ἀθηναί]ον.

⁵¹ Lines 48-51: ἐπαινέσαι τοῖς Νεοπολίταις τοῖς ἀπὸ [Θράικες ἦσαν ὅσιν ἀνδράσιν ἀγαθοῖς] | ἔς τε τὴν στρατιὰν καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν Ἀθηναίων· καὶ ἥτις ἐς Θάσον ἐστρατεύοντο χυμπολιορ[κ]έσοντες μετὰ Ἀθηναίων καὶ ἥτις χυμναυμαχῶν[τες ἐνίκον] καὶ [κατὰ γέν] χυμνεμάχον τὸν π[ό]λιντα χρόνον.

⁵² ἐς δὲ τὸ φερίσμα τὸ πρό[τερον] ἐ[π]ανορθῶσαι τὸ γ[ράμμα]τα τῆς βολῆς : κ[αὶ] ἐς αὐτὸ μεταγρά[φ]σαι ἀντὶ τῆς ἀποικί[ας] τῆς Θασί[ων] ἥτις συνδιεπολέμεσαν τὸν πόλεμον μετὰ Ἀθηναίων. On the probouleumatic character of the decree see P. J. Rhodes, *Boule*, cit., p. 246.

to the wishes of the faithful allies. It is, in fact, the record of their status as a colony of the Thasians that was apparently erased, which, in the first draft, by reason of the concessive value of the affirmation, was intended to exploit the resistance of the Neapolitans who fought with the Athenians “even though they were a colony of the Thasians and even though they had been besieged by them”. The new text, added in a different hand from the work of the cutter of the second decree, following the wishes of the applicants, substituted for the unwelcome phraseology a recollection of the battle fought together with the Athenians.⁵³

What one might call corrective erasure, well illustrated by the verbs ἐπανορθῶσαι and μεταγράψαι, resulted from an authorisation which had been requested and conceded through established institutional procedures.⁵⁴ Consequently, the determination with which the Neapolitans pursued their objective was aimed at severing all ties, even formal ones, with the former mother country. With this act of denial, they wished to reject their consanguinity, and epigraphical erasure assumes, therefore, the value of a voluntary nullification of the bond of blood.

Cases of simple erasure without subsequent reinscription, which are epigraphically well-rendered by the verbs ἐξαλείφειν and ἐκκολάπτειν,⁵⁵ may in several distinctive cases have the purpose of erasing the name of an individual or of the members of a particular family. By this very specific measure, they preserve, in a most brazen manner, the will to anathematise the past, preserving however, through the purposeful intervention of a cutting which is clearly observable by contemporaries as well as by later generations, the very memory of those events that they wish to obliterate by this method.⁵⁶ This practice,

⁵³ [ἐπ]αινέσαι τοῖς Νεοπ[ολίταις] <τοῖς> | παρὰ Θάσον [πρῶτον μὲν ὅς]τι συνδιεπο[λέμεσ]αν τὸν πόλεμον μετὰ Ἀθηναί[ο]ν καὶ πολιο[ρκ]όμενοι ὑπ[ὸ] Θασί[ο]ν καὶ Πελο[πον]νησί[ο]ν οὐκ ἦθ[έ]λησαν ἀλπο[στ]ήνα[ι] ἀπ’ Ἀθηναί[ο]ν. With emphasis on the affirmation of independence in the battles with the Thasians and of equality in relation to the Athenians, cf. J.-M. Bertrand, “La revendication de liberté, réflexions sur les modalités du discours politique dans les cités grecques”, in M. Molin ed., *Images et représentations du pouvoir et de l’ordre social dans l’Antiquité*, Paris, 2001, pp. 11-25, especially 17-19.

⁵⁴ The resolution for modification is expressed by the verb μεταγράφειν also in *IG*, I³, 110, 28 (decree for Oiniades of Palaikiathos, year 408/407); with reference to interventions where change is effectuated on public documents see also Thuc., I, 132; Xen., *Hell.*, VI, 3, 19. On the use, with similar meaning, of μεταστρέφειν see Ar., *Ach.*, 537.

⁵⁵ The idea of the erasure of a decree or a text or lines or several names from a list is frequently rendered by the verb ἐξαλείφειν: *IG*, I³, 127 = II², 1, line 30 (decree for the Samians, 405/404); *IG*, I³, 118, line 38 (decree for the Selymbrians, year 408); *IG*, II², 98, line 12 (treaty between the Athenians and the Kephallonians, in the year 375/374); *IG*, II², 1237, A line 19 (deme decree, 396/395); *SEG*, XXIV, 151, line 24 (around the middle of the 4th century); for erasures linked to administrative practices or political amnesties see *IG*, I³, 52, line 10; cf. also Thuc., III, 57, 2 (in clear opposition to ἀναγράφειν); Xen., *Hell.*, II, 3, 51-52 (*bis*: erasure of the name of Theramenes); And., I, (*De myst.*), 76, 79 (decree of Patrokleides), 103 (reconciliation of the year 403/402); [Arist.,] *Ath. Pol.*, 36, 2 (list of the three thousand). The cutting of a text or of lines is also rendered by the verb ἐκκολάπτειν, for which see *IG*, I³, 106, 22 (honours for exiles, year 409/408), with literary comparisons in Thuc., I, 132, 3; Demosth., LVII (*Contra Eubul.*), 64.

⁵⁶ Ch. W. Jr. Hedrick, *History*, cit., pp. XXI, 93, 107-113, rightly emphasises how phenomena of erasure do not constitute an *abolitio* of the memory as much as a *damnatio*, capturing very pertinently the “*damnatio memoriae* paradox” which is the discrepancy between erasure’s apparent goal, which is to destroy the memory, and its actual realisation, which is that of confirming the memory.

however, corresponds to political canons that do not appear to characterise the Athenian experience in any distinctive manner and appears, in fact, at a late period in the changeable and contradictory historical context of domination by Hellenistic rulers, but in any case well in advance of similar experiences in the Roman world, where it is not observable before the late Republican era.⁵⁷ During the long and dramatic conflict that Athens sustained in the 4th and 3rd centuries against the rule of the Antigonids the city never reached any real or lasting prospect of independence and experienced, on the contrary, long periods of subjection; in this same Athens, when Rome enters as a protagonist in Greek events, interventions of erasure seem to furnish the Athenians with a minimal political initiative that can no longer be expressed by recourse to arms. There are numerous cases where the names of those belonging to the Antigonid dynasty have been erased, at an historical moment accurately described by Livy. In the spring of the year 200 BC, at the approach of the Roman army, the city, no longer held back by fear, gave free rein to the hatred of Philip V that it had been nurturing. Having abolished the two Macedonian tribes, it ratified a general resolution of *damnatio memoriae*, making it the subject of a regular *psephisma* by the Assembly.⁵⁸ The People decided, with Biblical overtones, judging at least from the testimony of the Latin historian, that every statue and effigy and every inscription on them should be uprooted and destroyed, if it bore a reference either to the king or to his ancestors, and without any distinction between males and females. This execration also concerned the sacred and cultic sphere and obliged the priests to publicly curse “Philip, his sons and his kingdom, his naval and land forces, and the whole race and name of the Macedonians”.⁵⁹ The terrible curse, which was intended as an all-out strike against the

⁵⁷ An early example of *damnatio memoriae*, probably realised through the practice of *rasura*, may be suggested by the Plutarchan biography of Demetrios. The Athenians, having granted the appellation of Saviour-gods to Poliorcetes and his father in 307 BC (Plut., *Dem.*, 10, 4), in 287, when they reclaimed their freedom, erased Diphilos from the list of eponymous archons, who appeared there as a priest for the Saviour-gods: τόν τε Δίφιλον, ὃς ἦν ἱερεὺς τῶν Σωτήρων ἀναγεγραμμένος, ἐκ τῶν ἐπωνύμων ἀνείλον, ἄρχοντας αἰρεῖσθαι πάλιν ὥσπερ ἦν πατριον ψηφισάμενοι. On the reliability of the information see B. Dreyer, “The Hieres of the Soteres: Plut. *Dem.* 10, 4; 46, 2”, *GRBS*, 39, 1998, pp. 23-28. In the case, however, of the destruction of the statues of Demetrios of Phaleron, in the year 307, according to the testimony of Diog. Laert., V, 77, it does not seem possible to hypothesise interventions of erasure. On the episode cf. Chr. Habicht, *Athens*, cit., p. 67. For documentation on erasures in Roman political experience, the fundamental reference continues to be F. Vittinghoff, *Staatsfeind*, cit., especially pp. 21-43; on the erasure of the names of Cassius and Brutus, Caesar’s assassins, and of Mark Antony, see also Ch. W. Hedrick Jr., *History*, cit., pp. 93-94, 101-103, who considers the case of Marcus Manlius Capitolinus, in Dio Cass., fr. 26, to be a probable anachronism.

⁵⁸ On the political situation referred to here, with a discussion of sources and chronology, see Chr. Habicht, *Studien zur Geschichte Athens in hellenistischer Zeit*, Göttingen, 1982, pp. 142-158; Id., *Athens*, cit., pp. 196-204; N. G. L. Hammond, “The Reign of Philip V and Perseus”, in *A History of Macedonia*, III. 336-167 B. C., Oxford, 1988, p. 416 ff.

⁵⁹ Liv. XXXI, 44, 4-9: *rogationem extemplo tulerunt plebsque scivit ut Philippi statuae imagines omnes nominaque earum, item maiorum eius virile ac muliebre secus omnium tollerentur delerenturque... sacerdotes publicos quotienscumque pro populo Atheniensi sociisque, exercitibus et classibus eorum precarentur, totiens detestari atque exsecrari Philippum liberos eius regnumque, terrestres navalesque copias, Macedonum genus omne nomenque*. Cf. also Liv., XLI, 23, 1; Dio Chrys., *Or.*, 37, 41; Paus., I, 36, 5. For commentary on the decision of the Athenian assembly, see Chr. Habicht, *Gottmenschen und griechische Städte*, München, 1970², pp. 189-90; Id., *Studien*, cit., pp. 147-148, with attention to the temporal relationship regarding the erasure of the two

Macedonian race, condemning ancestors and descendants to the most radical oblivion, is commented on in the most merciless manner by Livy as follows: *Athenienses quidem litteris verbisque, quibus solis valent, bellum adversus Phillipum gerebant*.⁶⁰ The fragility of the Athenian situation is laid bare with a few lapidary words, which, however, correctly capture the military and political impotence of a city which initiates a collective project of erasure as a form of opposition to Philip V. In this respect, the cutting represents a crepuscular use of *damnatio memoriae* and signals a phase of weakness of the *polis* rather than emphasising complete control of its own internal and international resources. It can be observed, furthermore, that it ploughs a deep furrow with regard to the motivations and the meanings with which the same practice is effectuated within the Roman world against public enemies of the empire.⁶¹

The total obliteration of the Antigonid name ordered by the Assembly is realised in only a partial and apparently casual form. If, on the one hand, a survey showing the extent of the phenomenon of destruction is not feasible, on the other hand the extent of the erasures is still apparent today from numerous inscriptions which show that, though it was carried out under the aegis of the *ekklesia*, the policy of erasure was not entirely systematic and remained incomplete, since many names appear erased, others only partially and others again have totally escaped epigraphic condemnation, preserving a visible record of an oblivion that has remained a memory.⁶² With more limited extension of the phenomenon, the same considerations are also valid for erasures in the imperial period which have

Antigonid tribes; on the same subject see also N. G. L. Hammond, "The Reign", cit., pp. 367-569, especially 416-420.

⁶⁰ Liv., XXXI, 44, 9; J. Briscoe, *A Commentary on Livy, Books XXXI-XXXIII*, Oxford, 1989², p. 152, notes the dependence on the final judgement of Demosth., IV, (*Phil.* I), 30, through the mediation of Polybius.

⁶¹ In addition to the contributors in this volume, the reader is again referred to F. Vittinghoff, *Staatsfeind*, cit., Ch. W. Hedrick Jr., *History*, cit., pp. 91 ff.

⁶² See examples of erasure in *IG*, II², 665, col. I, lines 41, 48; 677, lines 5, 8, 13; 681, lines 7, 11; 682, lines 37-38, 40-44, 47-52 (cf. W. Ameling, "Zeugnisse und Kommentar", in K. Bringmann, H. von Steuben ed., *Schenkungen hellenistischer Herrscher an griechische Städte und Heiligtümer*, I, Berlin, 1995, nr. 15 [E]); 766 + *SEG*, XXII, 100, lines 21 (31 in *SEG*), 25 (35 in *SEG*); 775 + *SEG*, XVIII, 19, lines 14-15; 780 = *Syll.*³, 466, lines 11-12, 26; 781, line 2; 791, line 3; 825, lines 7-8; *Hesperia*, 16, 1947, p. 186, nr. 92, line 2; 30, 1961, p. 11, nr. 7, line 1, 6; 34, 1965, p. 90, nr. 3, lines 2, 8; *Agora*, XV, 57, line 1; 61, lines 26, 109; 89, lines 11-13, 29; 110, lines 4-5; 111, lines 8-9; 115, lines 16-17; 135, lines 1, 8, 17; 138, lines 4, 12, 39; *Agora*, XVI, 224, lines 16, 19. A case of possible destruction is documented by *IG*, II², 683, line 16. Within the same text, some lines have been erased, others preserved: see *IG*, II², 790 = *Syll.*³, 487, lines 12, 16-17; *SEG*, XXV, 155, lines 6, 17, 33-34; *Agora*, XVI, 187, lines 2-3, 37. The documents *IG*, II², 657, lines 18, 28-29; 666, line 8; 776, line 9; 777, line 9; 793, line 13; 1291, lines 23-24; 1299 = *Syll.*³, 485, lines 11-12, 36; 1304 = *Syll.*³, 547, line 5; *Agora*, XV, 119, lines 5-6 have escaped erasure. On the destruction of an equestrian statue of Demetrius Poliorcetes, perhaps dedicated in the year 303/302 (cf. L. Moretti, *Iscrizioni*, cit., nr. 7) see T. L. Shear Jr., "The Athenian Agora: Excavations of 1971 (plates 25-39)", *Hesperia*, 42, 1973, pp. 165-168; on the remains of an equestrian statue of Poliorcetes found in the agora see also *SEG*, XXXII, 151. For an initial census of the epigraphical documentation see also S. Dow, *Prytaneis. A Study of the Inscriptions Honoring the Athenian Councillors* (*Hesperia*, Suppl. 1), Athens, 1937, pp. 48-50, with restorations in Chr. Habicht, *Studien*, cit., p. 148, n. 137. The magnitude of the phenomenon is excessively emphasised by W. S. Ferguson, *Hellenistic Athens. An Historical Essay*, London, 1911, p. 277, as already noted by J. Briscoe, *Commentary*, cit., p. 151. For a description of the process of erasure and destruction see also Chr. Habicht, *Gottmenschentum*, cit., pp. 189-190.

obscured the name of Nero in a manner which also appears unsystematic.⁶³ As for the real reasons for this phenomenon, there is no need to look further than the sheer profusion of epigraphical artefacts, typified, during the Hellenistic era, by small letters and lengthy texts. These features, taken together, constituted a challenge for those conducting the search, even when that search was thorough. It is possible that the dispersal of monuments in several locations of public display is also relevant here.⁶⁴

A final example seems important for understanding how epigraphical erasure may indicate conditions of Athenian political subjection: in the spring of the year 88 BC Athens was compelled to choose between Rome and Mithridates. Allied with the Pontic king, in the spring two years later and under the pressure of Sulla, it was obliged to accept Roman protection. The tragic episodes which played out during this situation of political instability have left a trace in an inscription which preserves a list of contributors for a sacred delegation to Delphi; four times, in the ancient text, the name of Medeios, son of Medeios, Peiraieus, appears to have been erased, and just as frequently, the same name has been re-inscribed in the erased spaces. This personage is well-known, especially from epigraphical sources, and belonged to the magisterial class active in Athens and Delos; protagonist during a period of anarchy, he was associated with the Romans to whom he bound his own political fate.⁶⁵ The cutting signifies, therefore, the oblivion imposed on his name by order

⁶³ *IG*, II², 1989, line 1 + *SEG*, XXXIV, 155; *IG*, II², 1990, line 1; 3182, line 1; 3229 + *SEG*, XVIII, 80; 3278, line 2; *SEG*, XXXII, 252; *SEG*, XXXIV, 182. The inscriptions *IG*, II², 1990, line 3; 3277, line 2 (cf. *SEG*, XXXII, 251); 3280, line 1; *MDAI(A)*, 67, 1942, p. 45, nr. 60, line 2 have escaped erasure. Erasures of the name Caligula recur in *SEG*, XXXIV, 180, of Commodus in *IG*, II², 1112 + *SEG*, XXIV, 149, lines 9, 17, 28, 36; 1796 + 1800 = *Agora*, XV, 411, line 3; 2113, lines 2-3, 53; 3412, line 4; for erasures of the name Geta see *IG*, II², 1077 = *Agora*, XV, 460, lines 6-7, 23-24; 3416, lines 1-4.

⁶⁴ This is suggested by an epigraphical document of the 5th century, which orders a process of erasure in the context of a programme of administrative reorganisation, and invites “priests, *hieropoioi*, and any others who may have knowledge (εἴ τις ἄλλος οἶδεν) to report the presence of inscriptions upon which interventions are necessary; cf. *IG*, I³, 52, lines 11-13. On erasure of an administrative nature see also P. J. Rhodes, “Public Documents”, cit., p. 34. As a curiosity, in a completely different context note also the funerary inscription, *IG*, II², 5470, in which is preserved the record of a possible *damnatio* of familial memory, since the deceased denounces, in the first draft, a name composed successively of the gamonymic and then of the patronymic, but in the final draft, following an intervention of *rasura*, the name of the woman is accompanied by only the patronymic. For a discussion of similar cases in Roman epigraphical documentation from Spain see S. Lefebvre, “Les cités face à la *damnatio memoriae*: les martelages dans l’espace urbain”, *Cahiers Glotz*, 15, 2004, pp. 191-217. Conversely, on the epistyle of the funerary monument *IG*, II², 11891, the simple name of the woman was erased to be replaced with more gamonymic nomenclature.

⁶⁵ Cf. *IG*, II², 2336, to be consulted in the new edition with commentary by S. V. Tracy, *IG II² 2336. Contributors of First Fruits for the Pythais*, Meisenheim am Glan, 1982, lines 183, 185, 187, 189; at line 189 the name (and demotic) is erased; the name does not appear erased at lines 92 and 94; the citation of Medeios at line 165 is not verifiable. For a photographic image of the erasures see also S. V. Tracy, *Contributors*, cit., fig. 18; for a biographic profile of the individual, with particular reference to the archonship held in the year 101/100, and repeated three times subsequently in the years 91-88, see *ibid.*, pp. 159-164; 210; *LGPn*, II, p. 310, s. v. Μηδείος 8. For a first reading and evaluation of the erasures see A. Wilhelm, “Medeios in der Inschrift *IG* II 985”, in *Attische Urkunden*, III, Wien-Leipzig, 1925, pp. 59-61, which is also approved by S. V. Tracy, *Contributors*, cit., p. 66. See also *SEG*, XLV, 116, *bis*; XLVII, 142. For an historical commentary on the period, with a discussion of the sources, see J.-L. Ferrary, *Philhellénisme et impérialisme. Aspects idéologiques de la conquête romaine du monde hellénistique, de la seconde guerre de Macédoine à*

of the regime of the philosopher-tyrants Athenion and Aristion, associated with Mithridates, just as the reinscription, in post-Sullan Athens, sanctioned the rehabilitation of this pro-Roman archon, *reddita memoria et dignitate*.⁶⁶

In conclusion, epigraphical writing can provide evidence of the many ways in which the present reinvents its own, sometimes recent or very recent, past, by formalising processes of denial, correction or condemnation. The act, in itself always traumatic, evoked by the expression καθαιρεῖν τὴν στήλην, pursues political aims which may be of diverse origin. In the case of institutional *stasis*, the provision has subversive intent and denies, through the erasure of physical memory, remembrance and recognition of the system that constitutes the political term of reference. The intention is therefore to intervene in what should be remembered and in what should be condemned to oblivion when it lacks all resonance with the present. The past, as the epigraphical documentation examined here proves, does not comprise an objective reality but rather a communicated reality that is constructed and selected to compose the collective cultural memory. In this respect, the reader is referred to the very pertinent reflections expressed in print by Assman.⁶⁷ In a context of institutional stability, however, the erasure of a stele is intended to effectuate a new political course through a major change of direction, which may also be justified by changes in the international arena. The city accordingly recognises the necessity of a revision of its own political programmes by launching the initiative from within its own civic body.

Erasure, particularly if followed by reinscription, is an indication of the will to change or to update a text, in a less damaging form than destruction, but it is also, at the same time, even more evident and observable to later generations. Erasement without reinscription forcefully represents the determination of the community to express political condemnation. Anathema, however, effected by simple *rasura* of individual or familial names, represents, at least in the light of the examples that we have collected, a late phase in epigraphical writing and signals the waning political and military capacity of the city.

la guerre contre Mithridate, Rome, 1988, pp. 471-486; G. R. Bugh, "Athenion and Aristion of Athens", *Phoenix*, 46, 1992, pp. 108-123; Chr. Habicht, *Athens*, cit., pp. 297-314.

⁶⁶ Cf. also *PAA*, 110375 (Athenion), 166430 (Aristion). The Latin expression *reddita memoria et dignitas*, derived from the inscription for Flavian *CIL*, VI, 1783, lines 34-35, is nicely indicative of the process of rehabilitation.

⁶⁷ J. Assman, *Memoria*, cit.

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